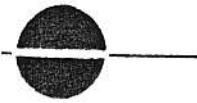


bufora



First Edition



INVESTIGATION

The NIC Guide

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Cover design Roy Sandbach

PART (1): THE AIMS OF INVESTIGATION

This booklet is designed as an addition to, rather than a replacement for, the field investigators manual. Its purpose is very straightforward. These few pages set out what a BUFORA case report should look like.

Whatever your reason for being interested in UFO investigation you should remember several duties that fall upon your shoulders.

Firstly, you owe it to yourself to be thorough and honest. NEVER forget that nine out of ten UFO sightings have a conventional explanation. These UFOs turn into IFOs. Enshrine it on a plaque in your office and if your case evaluations fall substantially below that percentage - then start to worry. Something is wrong, and the most likely something is the efficiency with which you are searching for a simple resolution to the sighting.

Secondly, you have a responsibility to the witness to keep in line with the Code of Practice. This is no idle set of words that you have agreed to abide by. It is the fundamental basis of your life as an investigator. From time to time it is necessary to ask probing questions of, or about, a witness. It may even happen that you need to ponder their integrity. Somehow you have to balance any information you discover that might tarnish a reputation alongside your task in explaining the encounter. If there is ever any doubt, always revert to protecting identities of sources or being deliberately vague. Set out embarrassing information on a separate sheet which will not then be visible to any outside reader of the files who might not be a signatory to the Code or as scrupulous as you must.

Remember the witness places their trust in you. Even if they are a rogue, then it is not for you to make value judgements on their motives.

But thirdly, you must always bear in mind that there ARE sightings which appear to reflect phenomena on the fuzzy edges of scientific understanding. You may have very definite views about what these phenomena actually represent (anything from alien spaceships to a psychological delusion). However, whilst it is not unreasonable for you to moot ideas in a case report, that is NOT the primary objective. Your opinions MUST NOT dictate or take over a case file. In the main this should be an objective presentation of the facts - warts and all.

Case reports that you submit are for posterity. You are creating tomorrow's historical archives. Fifty or a hundred years from now the UFO mystery might still be unresolved, but (hopefully) your work will be preserved for a new generation of researchers thanks to the BUFORA records.

It is a sobering exercise looking back now at BUFORA case reports from ten, twenty or thirty years ago. The names of the investigators will mean little to you. They have come, and they have gone. But a good case file stands out. You immediately KNOW that person had done their job. You can read it and immediately grasp what that unknown witness claims to have seen. You will find answers to questions YOU would have asked. And you will possess most of the data necessary to let you form your own opinion of the case.

If your case files are thorough enough to fulfill these objectives then your work too will live on. If not, then you are wasting your time.

PART (2): SELECTION OF CASES

How does an investigator discover cases to investigate? There are several ways.

Some members of the organisation (and ,indeed, the group itself) have from time to time published books. These bring in letters from witnesses who have previously not known where to relate their encounter. BUFORA also subscribes to a press cutting agency, which offers about 350 cuttings in an average year. About a quarter of these report local sightings.

But it would be best not to sit around waiting to be sent something from YOUR area. Instead, establish links with outlets that are likely to receive stories from the public. Police stations, local newspapers and airports are good places to start. These are busy establishments and are rarely able to devote time to the investigation of these reports. IF you can establish your credentials, as a serious, responsible investigator, accredited by a respected body like BUFORA Ltd. - then it may be that they will happily channel sightings through to you.

When trying to impress authorities, or remind the local community that they DO have a Ufologist in their midst (via a local press or radio appearance), then it is best to do so AFTER you have become established and can point to your AI card and show a completed case file as evidence of your critical and objective approach.

Generally speaking, the more cautious you are in what you say about UFOs when appearing before the public, the greater your chances of receiving maximum cooperation and obtaining cases to investigate.

Of course, if you do your job properly it might be that you will discover several cases a month. Indeed in a period of great activity (eg a UFO wave) this would probably be far more than that. It is simply neither practical nor desirable to spend a lot of time on every case.

You must learn the ability to discriminate. If someone takes the trouble to report a sighting to you then it is wise to say thank you and log it. But if it refers to little but a light in the sky and preliminary checks (or simple common sense) strongly implies that it will have a mundane explanation, you are encouraged NOT to devote considerable time and effort to investigation or the completion of a detailed case file. The only reasonable exception is if you are using the investigation as a training exercise to keep your hand in, or in a slack period for local cases.

Be alert for the case which has something extra. You will soon learn by experience when a sighting looks promising. Particular features to watch out for are stories where physical traces are allegedly left at a site, where any form of injury to the witness (however minor) is reported, where effects on a vehicle are claimed, where occupants are supposed to have been seen, where there is clear evidence of a time lapse, where a witness suffers psychological trauma (eg nightmares) after the encounter, and multiple witness stories where the observers are in different locations at the time of the event and are unrelated to one another.

If you concentrate your time and your preparation of submitted case files on these reports you will maximise efficiency as an investigator.

I N V E S T I G A T I O N

BUFORA OFFICE (files etc) 16 South Way Burgess Hill Sussex RH15 9ST

BUFORA Investigations 37 Heathbank Rd Cheadle Heath Stockport
(completed cases) Cheshire SK3 0UP

BUFORA Research 19 Hanemill Court Bellinge Northampton
(research contacts) NN3 4BU

YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR IS.....

YOUR LOCAL POLICE STATION IS.....

YOUR NEARBY CIVIL AIRPORT IS.....

YOUR NEAREST MILITARY BASE.....

YOUR LOCAL WEATHER CENTRE IS.....

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER IS.....

YOUR LOCAL RADIO STATION IS.....

Advisors to call on when needed during investigations:

Astronomical Phenomena Gary Anthony 141 Newington St Hull Humberside HU3 5LF

Medical/Hypno research Dr A Robertson 359 Mearns Rd Newton Mearns Glasgow G77 5LZ

Meteorological Events Dr T Meaden 54 Frome Rd Bradford-on-Avon Wilts BA15 1LD

Photographic Analysis Nigel Smith 125 Boscobel Street London NW8 8PS

Physical Trace Studies Dr Michele Clare 17 Old Quarry Ave Wales S. Yorks S31 8RW

C_H_E_C_K — L_I_S_TSuggested steps to follow during investigation

- Discover whether witness is on telephone
- Arrange earliest possible interview convenient to the witness (if ANY delay, send RI immediately)
- Meanwhile consider most likely options and initiate checks (viz air movements at time, via astronomical advisor for meteors, re-entries etc)
- At interview show Code of Practice and AI card
- At interview allow witness to run through story in own words uninterrupted (on tape if acceptable)
- Ask any questions you have noted after the above
- Get witness to sketch object and plan of site (with you present to guide, if possible)
- Visit the site with the witness if at all possible, taking measures, photographs (and samples if the case requires them - eg physical traces)
- Complete any appropriate supplementary forms
- Initiate follow-up via advisors or research dept.
- Check for additional sightings / information via police / or media
- Compile case report file including details above and submit to Director of Investigations when ready

PART (3): USING THE CHECKLIST

The checklist set out on the previous pages is there for your convenience. Please ensure that you keep it up to date, noting any important changes in advisors, officers or addresses.

Most of the advisors/officers are on the phone (Arnold West at the general office, Steve Gamble at the research department). Phone numbers have not been included as this document might be seen by outside sources, but you are encouraged to add them if you desire.

Generally you will be notified of a case direct from BUFORA by either your regional investigations coordinator (RIC) or the director of investigations. The checklist of things to do during an investigation is a guide, and need not be taken literally. But it is worth going through it for each case and ensuring that YOU are satisfied the step HAS been taken, or, if not, that you are able to justify the reason for failing to take it.

As you may have gathered, UFO investigation is no simple matter and CAN be time consuming. But it is important for the credibility of the field that all BUFORA accredited investigators (AIs) be seen to do their job in a responsible, analytical manner. Indeed, your continued AI status depends on it! Perhaps you may now appreciate why it is wise to be selective about those cases to which you need devote the majority of your precious time.

Making an early guess (even before interview) regarding the most likely explanations that could apply can be vital. Air traffic movements, for example, may only be logged by your airport for a limited period. At the end of your investigation it can be too late to check these crucial data.

Careful use of the advisors AFTER your witness interviews, is strongly recommended. Of course, these people (most of whom are BUFORA members and some of whom are also AIs) have their own time constraints, so please do not bother them with frivolous questions. However, there are definite occasions when you really SHOULD seek their opinion.

The astronomical advisor has a small annual budget from BUFORA's National Investigations Committee (NIC). If you are an AI, then you are automatically a full voting member of the NIC, so this IS your service. This advisor is an astronomer and is in regular contact with all the major sources of space data. The idea is to have one person who can supply you with data on bright meteors, stars or planets that might have been prominent in that part of the sky during a sighting, or more unpredictable events like major satellite re-entries. If you suspect your case might have an astronomy related solution please send basic details (date, time in GMT, and precise location are the most crucial) plus SAE for speedy reply.

The medical/hypnotic regression advisor is there to be consulted on cases where there is a suggestion of physiological effects on the witness or you are contemplating the use of hypnosis in a case. The Code of Practice lays down strict guidelines here. Non medically qualified people cannot be utilised, so please use the services of our advisor, who IS qualified in both fields of work.

The photographic analysis advisor will probably be a first port of call with a sighting before other avenues for detailed study might open up.

You will need to obtain the print/transparency/film (and, if at all possible, the negatives - which are ESSENTIAL for proper evaluation). The advisor will need to see these. There is a standard BUFORA form which advises a witness that we cannot be responsible for loss of the photographs, but that we shall naturally take great care and will endeavour to return their property as soon as possible. As with all hard evidence (films, samples etc) you are urged to either hand them over personally during a meeting or send them by recorded or registered post.

The other two advisors are not BUFORA members but are happy to assist. The physical traces advisor is a qualified researcher in the field and can examine soil, or more particularly, plant, grass or tree samples from a site.

The meteorological advisor is qualified in the field but CANNOT be used to supply weather reports for your area on a date in question (you must find your own local weather centre source). However, if you suspect that the UFO/IFO involved might have some relationship to the physics of the atmosphere (eg ball lightning, perhaps, or a whirlwind effect) then you are strongly urged to involve this advisor in your work.

If no advisor seems appropriate then please go through the director of research for relevant help (eg on a vehicle interference case).

BUFORA has several forms for your use. The standard (R1) is for general purposes, preliminary recording, or when a visit to the witness is neither possible nor justified by the case. PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT R1 FORMS ALONE. ALWAYS INCLUDE A NOTE FROM YOU ABOUT THE CASE AND EVALUATING ITS PROBABLE SOLUTION.

In addition, there are more specialised forms for use in unusual cases. For example, a photographic case questionnaire (which requests details of the camera and film etc), a vehicle effects form (when a vehicle is allegedly interfered with by a UFO), and one for physical effects on a witness.

In normal circumstances you will not have a stock of these, as supply is limited. However, a copy of each one is in BUFORA's Investigations Handbook and you can photocopy this if you wish. Otherwise, request the appropriate form when you need it from your RIC or the director of investigations.

A further form which ALL submitted case files SHOULD include as a FRONTISPICE is the computer data sheet. This has been specifically designed to facilitate transfer of information from your case file onto computer. I trust you appreciate that when dozens of lengthy case files are being submitted it slows down work considerably NOT to have this simple one page check on the key data. This can often be hidden away amidst a large report. Having the cases on an easily accessible computer data base is a benefit to all AIs, so please use these forms as much as you can.

If you do not have any (they are normally available at NIC meetings) - but extra ones are currently obtainable from:-

Mike Wootten 103 Hove Avenue London E17 7NG

Completed case files should be sent to the director of investigations. You may send a copy to your RIC first, if you wish. It is also highly advisable to retain a copy for your own files. AIs are encouraged to write a short precis (several hundred words) on any case that they consider to be especially interesting and submit this to the editor of BUFORA's magazine.

PART (4): DESIGNING YOUR CASE FILE

BUFORA has always avoided issuing strict instructions to standardise all submitted case files. To a large degree it is preferred to give the AI some freedom of expression in this regard.

However, it is naturally of great benefit if some standardisation occurs, as this makes it far easier to compare details between different case files which have been submitted by different investigators. One day you might be the one conducting research on the files and you will much appreciate this advantage at that point.

Therefore, it is proposed that your submitted case file should include the following sections in more or less the following order:-

- (a) A computer form and other general data cover as frontispiece.
- (b) A brief introduction to the details of the case and its solution - if there is one (ranging over no more than a couple of paragraphs)
- (c) An indication of how the case came to your notice, plus dates of receipt and various stages of investigation, completion and submission.
- (d) Full details on the site
- (e) Full details on the witness/witnesses
- (f) A fully described account of the events that occurred
- (g) Details of your work conducted during investigation; ie the steps taken to try to find a solution
- (h) Your conclusions, with any explanation that you intend to proffer being fully justified, or, if you regard the case as unidentified, this conclusion also justified.

All other data should come as appendices at the END of the file. That would include BUFORA forms, sketches and site maps (photocopies of the relevant OS map marked with the witness location and movements of the UFO are extremely useful). Also site photographs and any complete transcripts you may be submitting from tapes of your interviews.

It is best that these things do NOT come within the main body of the case file, since the researcher can then read your report more readily and consult these extra data together as and when required.

I hope this booklet will be of some help to you. There are few books that may also be of assistance (apart from BUFORA's field investigators handbook - available from the main BUFORA address). But these include:-

The UFO Handbook by Allan Hendry (Sphere) 1980 (ISBN 0906-14340-6)

UFO Study by Jenny Randles (Robert Hale) 1981 (ISBN 07091-8864-1)

You may have to check specialist booksellers to buy them, but your local library will either have them or will get them for you if you ask.